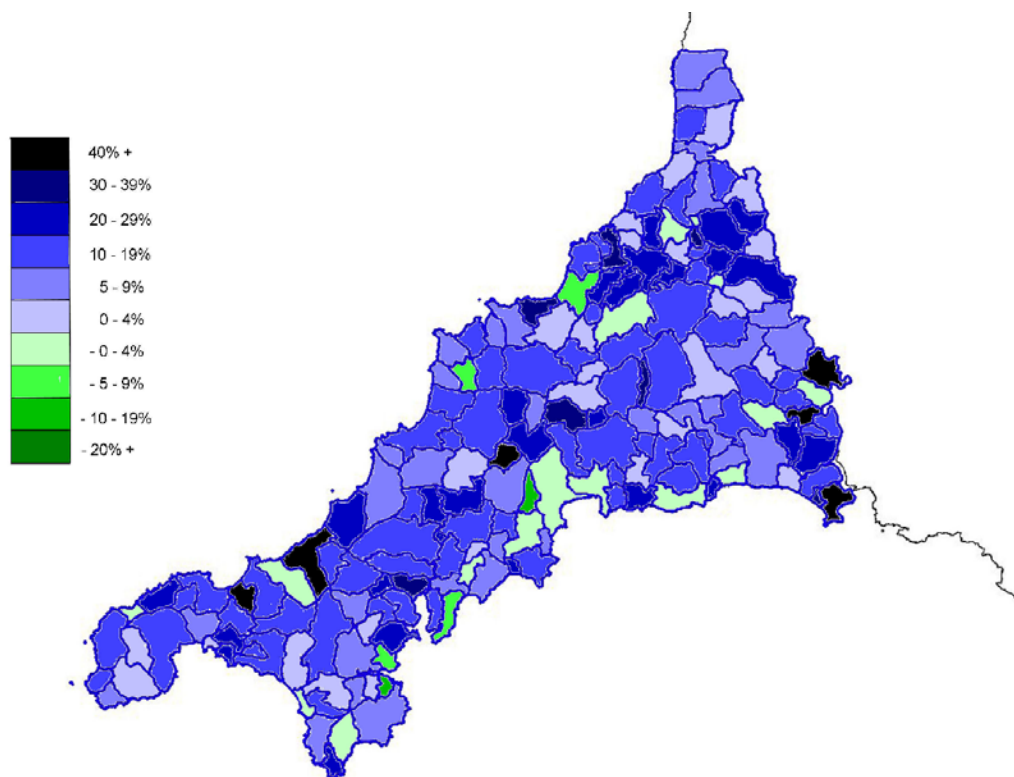


Population change in Cornwall 1801-41

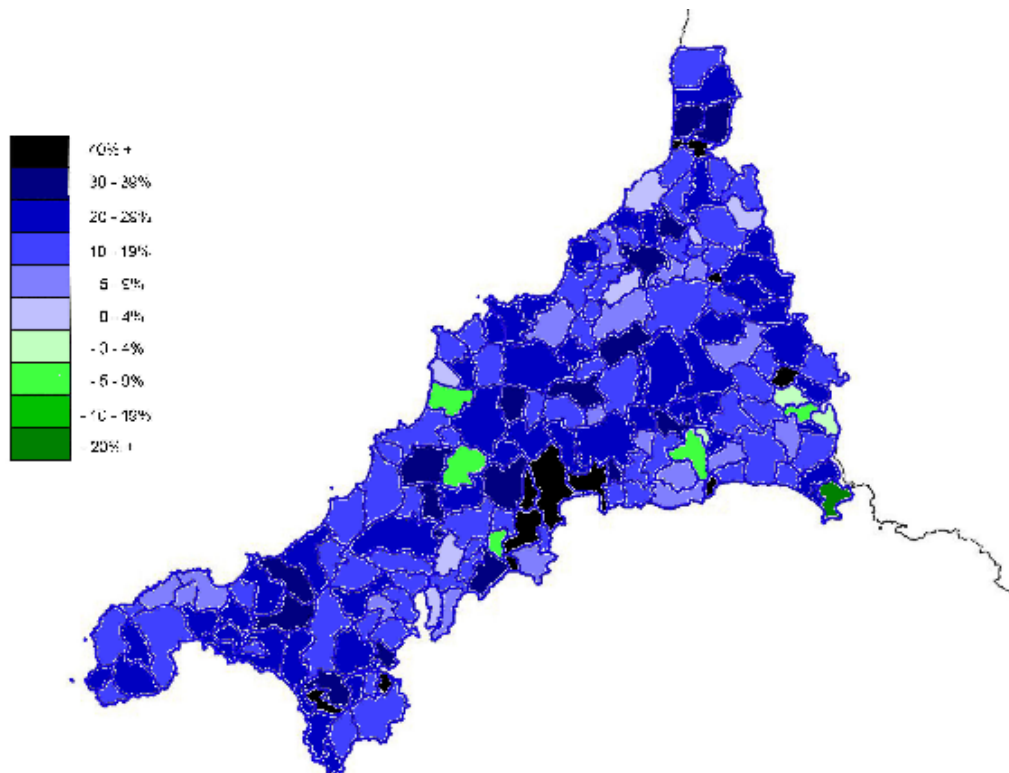
1801-11

The 1800s were years of war, including periods when fears of invasion reached fever pitch as Napoleon massed his armies in northern France. We might see some faint echoes of this in the population history of this decade, as most of those parishes that lost people were situated on or near the south coast, presumably the main source of pressed men for the navy. However, virtually every parish in Cornwall experienced strong population growth from 1801 to 1811, particularly some industrial parishes such as Illogan, Phillack and Calstock, together with Maker, no doubt boosted by dockyard employment. Population also grew markedly in a belt of rural parishes to the north of Bodmin Moor, possibly a reflection of good times for farmers on the back of high wartime food prices?



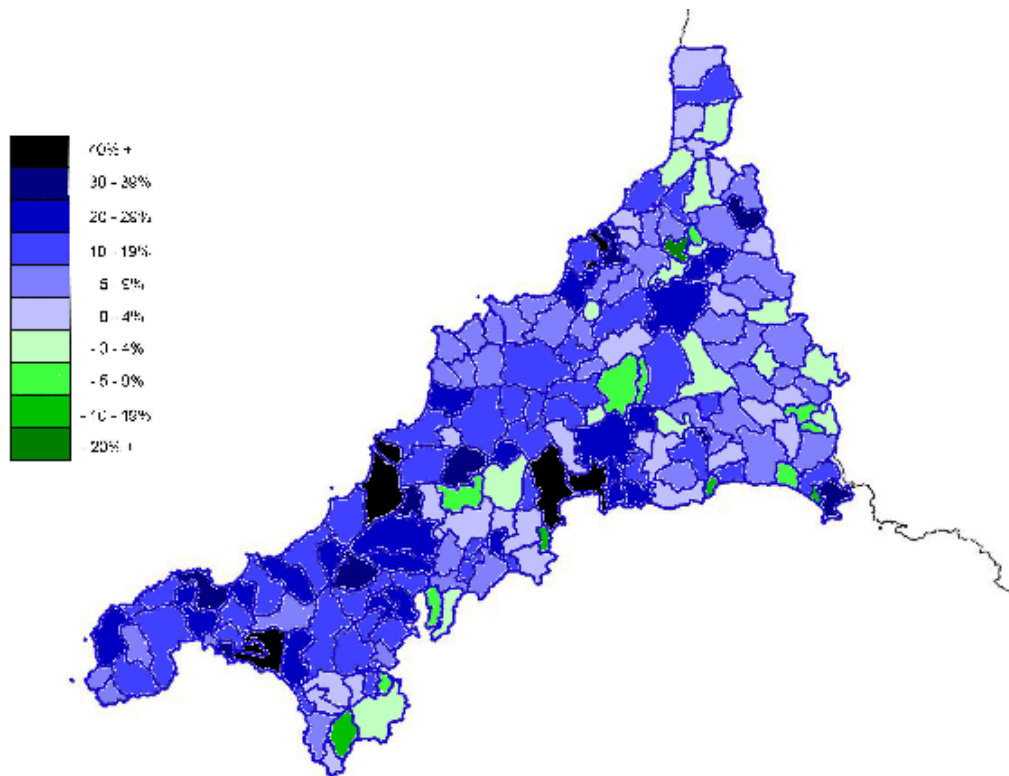
1811-21

Most of those parishes that had lost population in the 1800s showed strong recovery in the 1810s. To some extent this may be a function of inaccurate returns in the 1801 Census – the figure for Camborne for example seems highly suspect. But the growth in the parishes bordering St Austell bay was also no doubt stimulated by the opening of copper mines in this area. Buoyantly expanding numbers was the general pattern in most of Cornwall and parishes of high growth could be found in east and west, including remote farming areas on the Lizard and the far north. The partial exception to this picture was the south east of Cornwall, where several parishes experienced a decline as wartime conditions ended and perhaps the pull of Plymouth and Devonport began to be felt.



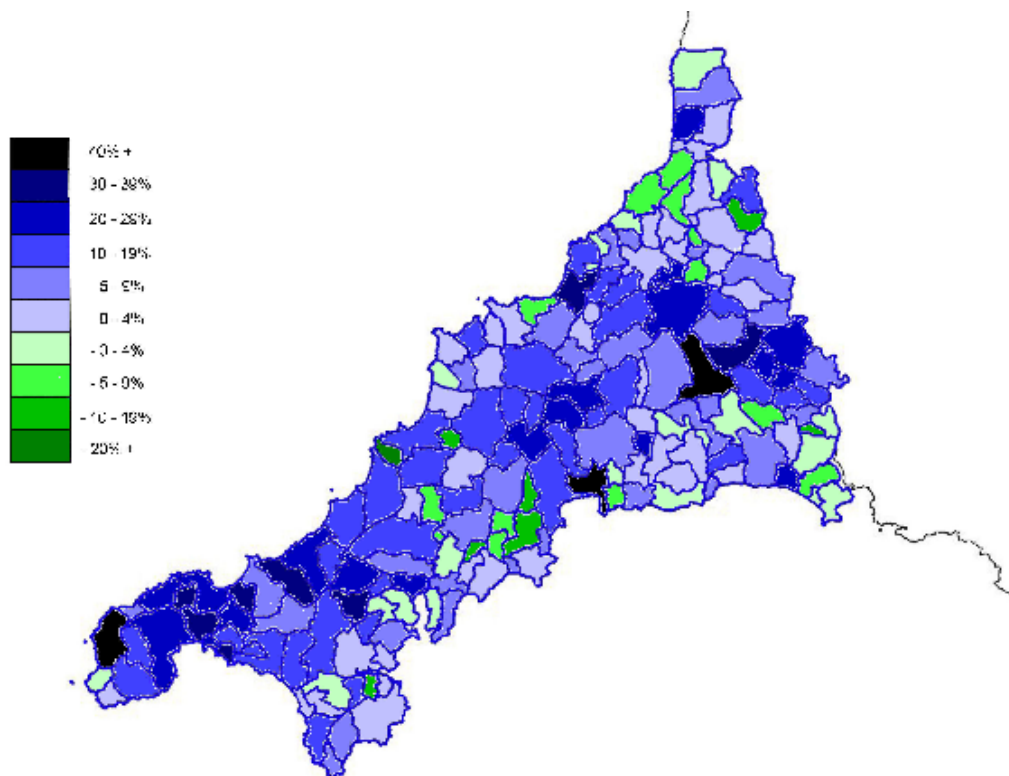
1821-31

In the 1820s there was more variation and the first hints of rural depopulation can be noticed, for example in some of the parishes around Bodmin Moor, in south east Cornwall, in the Stratton district, in agricultural mid-Cornwall and on the Lizard. Conversely, strong growth remained the pattern in St Austell and St Blazey & Tywardreath, while the mining parishes of Perranzabuloe, Breage and Germoe saw rapid increases. In general Cornwall west of Truro along with parts of mid-Cornwall saw the strongest expansion in this decade while growth began to slow down in many parts of the east.



1831-41

The pattern of the previous decade continued in the 1840s, but in this decade the opening of new mines in the Caradon district in east Cornwall complicated things, producing strong population growth on the inhospitable uplands of St Cleer parish. Other places where numbers grew rapidly tended to be mining parishes – St Just in Penwith, St Blazey & Tywardreath, Camborne, Ludgvan and Towednack for example. Less rapid growth or even decline was more common in Cornwall north of the river Ottery. Other areas that were losing people included parishes in the south east bordering on the Tamar and Plymouth, a group of farming parishes west of St Austell and north of the Roseland and another group around the Fal. However, the majority of Cornish parishes were still experiencing strong population growth in this decade.



Bernard Deacon June 2007